

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 22, 34, 43 45, 52, and 54 are amended; claims 12, 21, 42, 46, 50, and 55 are canceled; and claims 59-64 are newly added. Claims 1-11, 13, 20, 23, 41, 43-45, 47-49, 51-54, and 57-64 are now pending in the application. Applicants respectfully request reexamination and reconsideration of the application.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 3-8, 13-16, 19, 24, and 27-33 are allowable and claims 42-44, 46, 52, 53, and 55 contain allowable subject matter. As discussed below, Applicants assert that all claims are now in condition for allowance.

There are now twelve independent claims pending in the application: claims 1, 3, 14, 16, 19, 22, 24, 27, 34, 45, 52, and 54.

Of those independent claims, claims 3, 14, 16, 19, and 24 were allowed in the most recent Office Action. Independent claims 3, 14, 16, 19, and 24 are therefore allowable.

Claims 34, 45, 52, and 54 were rewritten to include an allowed dependent claim. Specifically, claim 34 was amended to include allowed claim 42; claim 45 was amended to include allowed claim 46; claim 52 was rewritten in independent form; and claim 54 was amended to include allowed claim 55. Independent claims 34, 45, 52, and 54 are thus also now in condition for allowance.

Applicants note that the limitation "wherein said cover is not used during testing of said die" was removed from claims 34 and 52 because the "sensor" element added to claim 34 and the sensing step in claim 52 appear unquestionably to distinguish over the prior art of record. Nevertheless, the limitation "wherein said cover is not used during testing of said die" is now found in new dependent claims 61 and 62, which depend from claims 34 and 52, respectively.

Independent claims 1 and 22 are amended to describe the cover as creating a clean space. Neither JP 01-140071 nor JP 02-254367 nor any of the prior art of record teaches such a feature, which is not a trivial feature. A sealed cover that creates a clean space for the probes reduces the probability that testing the dies—which involves bringing the probes into contact with the dies—will transfer contaminants to the dies that may damage the dies. Indeed, as is known, the processing of semiconductor dies must typically be done in a clean-room environment, and a cover that creates a clean space around the probes facilitates clean-room testing of the dies. Thus, the sealed cover that creates a clean space around the probes, which is now recited in

claims 1 and 22, not only distinguishes over the prior art of record but provides advantages not found in the prior art. Claims 1 and 22 are therefore also patentable and in condition for allowance.

For all of the foregoing reasons, each of the twelve independent claims now pending in the application is in condition for allowance. All of the other claims are also allowable because of their dependency from one of the independent claims. Therefore, all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Applicants note the Examiner's indication that the PTO-1449 form submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement dated August 20, 2004 contained typographical errors in the serial number. Applicants enclose a corrected version of the PTO-1449 form and request that the cited references be considered and the PTO-1449 form initialed and returned.

Claim 50 is canceled, mooted the rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

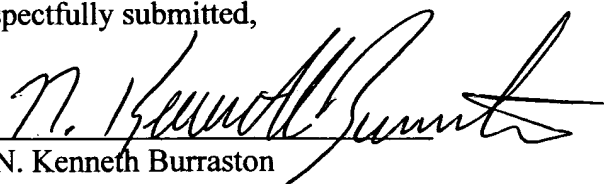
The rejection of claims 1, 2, 9-12, 17, 18, 22, 23 25, 26, 34, 35, 37, 41, 45, 47, 51, 54, 56, and 58 under 35 USC 102(b) or 35 USC 103 as anticipated by JP 01-140071 or obvious in view of JP 01-140071 and US Patent No. 6,316,954 to Venaleck, US Patent No. 4,396,935 to Schuck, and US Patent No. 5,577,819 to Olsen and the rejection of claims 1, 20-22, 34-36, 38-41, 45, 48-51, 54, 57, and 58 under 35 USC 102(b) or 35 USC 103 as anticipated by JP 02-254367 or obvious in view of JP 02-254367 and US Patent No. 4,176,897 to Cameron are addressed above. That is, as discussed above, each of the twelve independent claims distinguishes over the prior art of record and is in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all of the claims are allowable and the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a discussion with Applicants' attorney would be helpful, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (801) 323-5934.

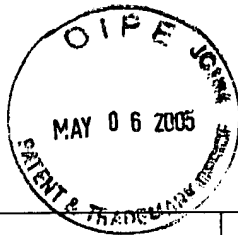
Respectfully submitted,

Date: May 3, 2005

By


N. Kenneth Burraston
Reg. No. 39,923

Kirton & McConkie
1800 Eagle Gate Tower
60 East South Temple
P.O. Box 45120
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111-1004
Telephone: (801) 323-5934
Fax: (801) 321-4893



Modified Form PTO/SB/08A

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (use as many sheets as necessary)				<i>Complete If Known</i>	
				Application Number	10/025,303
				Filing Date	December 19, 2001
				First Named Inventor	Eldridge et al.
				Group Art Unit	2839
				Examiner Name	Neil Abrams
Sheet	1	of	1	Attorney Docket No.	20206-12

U.S. PUBLISHED PATENT DOCUMENTS							
Examiner Initials*	Cite No. ¹	U.S. Patent Document		Name of Patentee or Applicant	Publ./Issue Date	Related [#]	Copy Enclosed
		Number	Kind Code ²				
	1.	5974662		Eldridge et al.	11/2/1999	x	

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS								
Examiner Initials*	Cite No. ¹	Foreign Patent Document			Name of Patentee or Applicant	Publ. Date	T ⁶	Copy Enclosed
		Office ³	Number ⁴	Kind Code ⁵				
	2.	JP	11-074322		Mitsubishi Electric Corp.	3/16/1999		
	3.	EP	046091		Cascade Microtech, Inc.	12/11/1991		
	4.	DE	19733861		Siemens	2/25/1999		

Examiner Signature		Date Considered	
-----------------------	--	--------------------	--

* EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication

¹Unique citation designation number. ²See attached Kinds of U.S. Patent Documents. ³Enter Office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). ⁴For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. ⁵Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST.16 if possible. ⁶Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language Translation is attached.

** Reference cited in parent application US Serial No. ___. 37 CFR § 1.98(d)

*** Pre-OG Notice By Deputy Commissioner Stephen G. Kunin dated July 11, 2003 waiving the requirement to file copies of US patent publications in applications filed after June 30, 2003.

& Notice dated October 19, 2004 by Deputy Commissioner for Patent Examination Policy waiving requirement to file copies of pending US patent applications if the applications are stored in the USPTO's IFW system.

Commonly owned US patent or application whose subject matter may be related to the subject matter of the instance patent application.